

North Carolina Trends in Nursing Education: 2003 – 2007

February, 2008

Executive Summary

Understanding trends in nursing education is a key component in strategic planning for the nursing workforce. This report examines characteristics of the nursing student population and the programs in which those students are enrolled in North Carolina. The report addresses:

- the number of applicants, qualified applicants, admissions, and new enrollees in 2007 and how those numbers have changed since 2003
- current enrollment figures and trends in enrollment
- a summary of on-time completion for the past 3 years aggregated across all prelicense student types and program options for each program accepting prelicense students
- on-time completion rates for each cohort of students scheduled to graduate during the 2006-2007 academic year, broken down by student type and program option
- a breakdown of recent graduate numbers for each nursing program, and the trend in graduate numbers over time
- the demographic characteristics of currently enrolled nursing students - age, citizenship status, gender, and race - and how those characteristics are changing over time
- descriptions of our nursing education faculty and faculty vacancies across the state

This report is designed as a statistical reference document. Readers will want to consult the tables for specific facts and figures. However, a number of general findings are worth noting here.

Interest remains high in all types of nursing programs. Even though many programs have expanded enrollments in recent years, LPN programs were only able to admit 54% of their qualified applicants in the 2006-07 academic year. In entry-level RN programs that figure was even less: only 48% last year. This inability to admit a larger proportion of qualified students varies by program and student type, but also has persisted over the past 5 years in spite of program expansions. More expansion is needed in our nursing education programs both to satisfy the demand for nursing education and to address a developing nursing shortage in our state.

The total number of new graduates coming out of most nursing education programs increased in 2007 over the previous year: 307 more new RNs graduated from entry-level programs and 38 more RNs advanced their education to a BSN degree in 2007 than was true in 2006. PNE programs showed a small decline: 13 fewer graduated in 2007 than in 2006.

On-time completion rates are an indicator of nursing education program efficiency in turning out new graduates. To allow for fluctuations year to year, programs are assessed on an aggregated 3 year rate. For PNE programs the overall 3 year on-time completion rate was 62.8% for the period 2005 - 2007. For the two hospital diploma